## REMARKS

Claims 1-31 are pending in the application. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1-31 were rejected as being rendered obvious by either the combination of Riggan (USPN 6490252) and Sreenan (USPN 5742772), or the combination of Zinky (USPN 6691148) and Sreenan. Obviousness requires that the combination of references applied teach or suggest all the limitations in the claim. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 1 under either ground because neither combination teaches or suggests "constructing an electronic service contract between at least two primary parties, wherein the primary parties comprise a service provider and a service customer, and wherein the electronic service contract includes specifications for configuration by the primary parties and by at least one sponsored party."

In the Office Action, the Examiner conceded that neither Riggan or Zinky disclose the use of a sponsored party. The issue addressed below is limited to whether Sreenan indeed uses a sponsored party as recited in claim 1, thus curing the deficiencies of both Riggan and Zinky. Applicants respectfully submit that it does not.

In addressing that issue, the Examiner stated:

> "In as much as the sponsored party is an intervening party between the user and the service provider, any network management interface performing the same function would be functionally equivalent to the claim limitations. Sreenan (See Figs. 6-7) show a resource manager intervening interface in a QOS contract environment."

Col. 7:59-60 in Sreenan specifies that the resource management is located within a bride. In turn, Col.42-43 provides, in relevant part, that "[a] network service provider may implement a bridge server as a switch. . ." From the foregoing, it clearly follows that the network management interface is part of the service provider, which is one of the primary parties in the claimed invention, and not the separate sponsored party as alleged by the Examiner. Consequently, the combination of Riggan or Zinky with Sreenan fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn and the claim be allowed.

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Applicants submit that the rest of the claims in the application recite either directly or by reference the "sponsored party" element. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the remaining claims should be allowed at least for the reasons set forth above related to the allowability of claim 1.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee(s) necessary to enter this paper and any previous paper, or credit any overpayment of fees to deposit account 09-0468.

Respectfully submitted,

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